sale system. Whatever might be the intimate relation between the preservation of forests and a copious rainfall, none could dispute the fact that forests kept the springs full and the surface soil moist and thus conduced to the health of the country. Before the introduction of the systems of permits and coupe sales, the streams that fed the rivers had a steady and sustained flow of water long after the cessation of the rains ; but such streams, after the introduction of the processes of denudation, got dried up in a couple of days after the rains ceased. He understood that the felling of the trees had been ordered to be stopped for similar reasons at the instance of the Chief Engineer from the catchment area of the Kodayar. A similar step was all the more essential to conserve the forest in the meagre basin of the Shencottah rivers. He, therefore, prayed that Government might be pleased to take steps for the immediate stoppage of all fellings and removal of trees within the area referred to, and make efficient arrangements for the complete conservation of the entire area including private holdings.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

21. Provision of fuel reserves for estates situate in or on the boundaries of reserved forests.

Mr. R. J. A. Moore (Member, South Travancore Planters' Association) prefaced his representation by saying that many of the estates belonging to his Association were 44 years old, having been opened first with coffee and tea and latterly with rubber. During that long time, firewood had been used for fuel and no provision was made for the future with the result that their supply of fuel would become non-existent in the near future. They had already planted up some areas with trees for fuel, but they would not be available for at least 15 years. As most estates paid revenue to Government in the shape of export duty and land tax, the Member requested that some help might be given so that the industry they were engaged in might flourish. The estates most in need of firewood were those situate in the Ponmudi and Ashamboo Districts. The matter had been brought to the notice of Government but with little success so far. The great stumbling block to a settlement of the matter was the fact that those estates lay within the borders of the Reserved forests. If the estate owners had known that such restrictions would be placed on further extension of their estates, they would have taken the necessary steps to provide themselves with additional lands. The State had about 2,344 square miles of Reserved forests or 30 per cent of the total area. What the Member asked was that about 1,000 acres from the Reserved forests be excised and sold to them at Rs. 25 per acre for supplying fuel to the estates.

In conclusion, the Member suggested that the vast areas of grass land lying within the Pallode Reserve be planted up with fuel or other trees. At present those grass lands gave no revenue to Government and, as long as they were covered with grass, trees were not likely to grow thereon, except of a very poor size and quality. Further, the grass was being yearly burnt off and that was a source of danger. His proposal was that the planters of the neighbouring estates be asked to clear up the land and plant it with trees for fuel, in the same way as and on terms similar to those on which the planters were looking after outlying roads.

To the Dewan's enquiry, the Member said that trees would grow in the lands mentioned by him.

Dewan's reply.—A detailed report will be called for from the Conservator of Forests on the Member's representation and the question considered on receipt of that officer's report.

22. Cattle grazing Rules.

Mr. W. A. J. Milner (Member, Central Travancore Planters' Association) complained against the new rules for the grazing of estate cattle under which proprietors of tea and coffee estates were permitted to graze only 10 head of cattle per 100 acres, free of tax. They came to know of the new rules only last year when the Forest Department requested that estates should take out passes for grazing cattle on Government grass land at the rate of 4 annas per head per annum. A protest was immediately sent in to Government pointing out that free grazing of

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estate cattle was an old privilege going back many years and that it was a great encouragement to labour to settle down and make homes in Peermade. The trouble was that cattle were necessary on estates for several reasons and they belonged to their Kanganies and coolies and not to the proprietors, so that, if the present rules were to stand, they would all have to pay the grazing tax, which would be a distinct hardship to them, small as it might seem, and would cause dissatisfaction amongst their labour. The coolies, being family people, had to keep cows to supply their children with milk so that on an estate of 600 acres, 200 or 300 cattle (cows and calves) might be required for that purpose. Again, bulls had to be kept on estates for carting purposes connected with the motor lorries of Mundakayam, there being no outside cartmen in Peermade as in Kottayam for instance, and if they did not make their own carting arrangements they should be cut off entirely from communication with Mundakayam. Those cart bulls were also owned by their labour and should surely be entitled to free grazing. Some 30 or 40 carts were required per estate for that purpose, so that the old free allowance of 500 head of cattle for all purposes for each estate was but a reasonable one. The extra revenue to be derived from that source was insignificant. Its collection would only lead to friction between forest rangers and the coolies, whose cattle were liable to be impounded whenever they strayed from an estate to Government grass land. The Member, therefore, requested that they might be allowed to revert to the old grazing rules, by which 500 head of cattle were allowed free grazing, the right being transferable from one estate to another and not being limited to cattle owned by the proprietors. Of course, if Tamil Kanganies and coolies who had resided 20 or 30 years on the estates could be considered "Travancoreans," as they surely should be after such long residence, then the grievance of the proprietors would be met, as they would be exempt from the tax as being "Travancoreans".

Dewan's reply.—A report has been already received on the subject from the Conservator of Forests. A further report will be called for from him on the Member's representation and the question again considered on receipt of that report.

23. Exclusion of the Cardamom Hills from the jurisdiction of the Forest Department.

Mr. Sanyasi Mallayan Chetti (Member, Devicolam taluk) said that, in pursuance of the orders of Government, the cardamom growing areas had been separated from the Forest areas in the Cardamom Hills Reserve. But the former area had not so far been formally transferred to the jurisdiction of the Revenue Department. He understood that it had been suggested that, even in regard to that area, the jurisdiction should continue to vest in the Forest Department as there were some tree-growths here and there in that area. The area did not as a fact contain much valuable tree-growth. The Member, therefore, requested that the cardamom growing area, if not the entire Cardamom Hills Reserve, be disafforested and transferred to the jurisdiction and control of the Revenue Department and all interference of the Forest Department in so far as that area was concerned completely stopped. In regard to the removal of timber from patta lands, the owners of cardamom lands under the old rules were granted free passes, while the new cultivators were required to pay seigniorage rates. That was hard because, while the old cultivators had paid a *tharavila* of only Rs. 10 per acre, the new cultivators had paid at the rate of Rs. 25 per acre. There was, therefore, no justification for the distinction and he prayed that it be wholly removed. A similar distinction was also observed in the matter of permits for the grazing of cattle. That should also be done away with.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

(3) Salt.

24. Development of home-salt culture and the creation of a separate Salt Department for the State.

Mr. M. Sivathanu Pillai (Member, Agastiswaram taluk) first represented that, of the total quantity of salt required for consumption in the State, about one-half had to

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